(d) Pakistan Government continues to follow Restrictive Trade Practices with India. Moreover, contrary to its obligations, including under the WTO, Pakistan has not yet extended MFN treatment to India.

Oil for food scheme

† 2633. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering Iraq for "Oil for food" programme sponsored by the U.N.O.;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the progress made so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) to (c) Under the United Nation's Oil for Food Programme, a number of Indian companies had won contracts amounting to $1.1 billion approximately, between 1996-2002. After the war in Iraq, the Oil for Food Programme was extended initially for a period of 45 days under UN Security Council Resolution 1472 and subsequently for a further period of six months under UN Security Council Resolution 1483 for approved and prioritized contracts. The programme expires on November 20,2003. Prioritization by the UN is an ongoing process and, under Resolution 1483,56 contracts won by Indian companies, of a total value of approx. $275 million, have been prioritized as of July 2003 and are under various stages of implementation.

Regarding Indo-South Africa cooperation

2634. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether talks were held recently between India and South Africa for strengthening bilateral economic co-operation; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the details of agreement signed between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) Agreed minutes signed at the end of the talks contains measures to strengthen collaboration in areas such as political, defence, economic, culture, science and technology.

Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group meeting

2635. MISS MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI B. J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group Meeting was held in last May in London; and

(b) if so, the decisions taken therein, especially to combat cross-border terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVUAY SINGH): (a) and (b) A meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group was held in London from 19-20 May, 2003. Cross-border terrorism was not on the agenda of the meeting.

Government's role in Sri Lankan peace process

2636. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a senior Sri Lankan Tamil Leader has appealed to India to exert pressure on the International Community for democratizing the on-going peace process in the Island by including other Tamil groups instead of talking only to the LTTE, indirectly requesting India to get involved in the peace process; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the policy of our Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) and (b) Various Sri Lankan Tamil Leaders have expressed their views and concerns on the peace process in Sri Lanka to India. Government of India's policy consists of a three-fold commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, and to the restoration of a lasting peace, through a peaceful, negotiated settlement that meets the just aspirations of all elements of Sri Lankan society.